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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/I

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SUBJECT: PM'S OCTOBER 15 BAGHDAD VISIT: LOOKS GOOD ON PAPER

REF: A. ANKARA 1477

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 2800

Classified By: POL Counselor Daniel O'Grady, for reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The GOT is pleased with the 48 MOUs, protocols and agreements PM Erdogan and his nine ministers signed with their Iraqi counterparts during Erdogan's October 15 visit to Baghdad. The MFA realizes that implementing the accords will be difficult. The MOU on natural gas exports establishes a Joint Working Group tasked to produce recommendations by February. To secure Iraqi support for the Counterterrorism Agreement, the GOT dropped from the text Article 4, which sought Baghdad's acquiescence to Turkish cross-border operations against the PKK. Turkey's interests in Iraq continue to grow, along with its commercial ambitions. Securing effective KRG and Iraqi government support for Turkey's campaign to eliminate the PKK and resolving the status of Kirkuk remain Turkish priorities. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) During an October 21 meeting, MFA Iraq Office's Can Oguz evinced satisfaction with PM Erdogan's October 15 visit to Baghdad. However, he conceded that implementing the 48 MOUs, protocols and agreements signed by the nine-minister Turkish delegation "will be the difficult part." According to Oguz, "the focus now shifts to Murat" Ozcelik, Turkey's new ambassador to Iraq, whose task is to encourage the relevant Iraqi ministries towards establishing technical-level implementation teams with their Turkish counterparts. He added FM Davutoglu and Trade Minister Caglayan hope to reinforce Ozcelik's effort by visiting Baghdad again in early November.

[1](#)3. (C) Among the 48 accords, Oguz identified the Counterterrorism Agreement and trade MOUs as delegation priorities. He depicted the former as providing a legal basis for Turkish-Iraqi cooperation against the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). He acknowledged that, to secure the GoI's consent to the agreement, Turkey had to drop from the text Article 4, which sought to gain Iraqi acquiescence to Turkish cross-border operations against the PKK. Regarding the latter, he recalled the long-time GOT ambition to open a border crossing point in addition to truck-choked Habur Gate. This ambition had run afoul of Iraqi government and KRG disagreement over who should control the new gate and its customs revenue. Oguz contended the GOT had overcome the internal Iraqi dispute by agreeing to the simultaneous openings of border crossings at Senova, which is favored by the KRG, and Ovakoy, the preference of the Iraqi central government. He argued projected growth in cross-border trade would justify both.

[1](#)4. (C) Oguz said that, to his knowledge, Turkish principals had not revisited with their counterparts Turkey's moribund

effort to mediate between Iraq and Syria over PM Malaki's charges of Syrian complicity in the August 19 Baghdad bombings. He implied Turkey had shifted its attention to New York and Iraq's efforts to engage the UN on the bombing. "We are willing to work with Laborde if his mandate is regional and not focussed on Syria," he said.

¶15. (C) Turning to another Turkish priority, Kirkuk, Oguz said PM Erdogan had emphasized Turkey's support for making the city and its environs a stand-alone governate. Oguz urged that change be made prior to the January elections.

¶16. (C) The Turkish Energy Minister signed four energy MOUs in Baghdad, including the first-ever natural gas MOU with Iraq. MFA Energy Department Head Berris Ekinici told us the Gas MOU, while "only an MOU," establishes a Joint Working Group on natural gas exports that has an ambitious target of producing recommendations by February. The GOT and GOI also signed an MOU on renewal of the Kirkuk-Yamurtuluk oil pipeline that opens up the oil price and transit fee for re-negotiation. They also signed an MOU for the GOT to provide training on Natural Gas Distribution and Tendering, and an Electricity MOU that contemplates construction of a 130 km-long, 400 KW line from Cizre (near Silopi, just north of Habur Gate) to Mosul. In Yildiz's meeting with the Minister of Electricity, they also discussed Turkey building a natural gas power station in Iraq to supply Iraqi market. The short meeting between Yildiz and Minister of Oil Sharistani focused on their joint interest in expanding natural gas exports to Turkey.

¶17. (C) COMMENT: Turkey's constellation of interests in Iraq is growing in ways that support our stabilization efforts.

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Erdogan's trade-heavy visit agenda (REF A) suggests the GOT's increasing interest in securing a major share of Iraq's reconstruction and modernization contracts throughout the country, beyond the three northern governates. Nevertheless, Turkey's Iraq priorities remain securing central government and KRG cooperation that results in the elimination of the PKK and resolving the status of Kirkuk.

JEFFREY

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